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SPECIFICATION

TITLE

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**OPTICALLY PUMPED, SURFACE-EMITTING SEMICONDUCTOR LASER DEVICE
AND METHOD FOR THE MANUFACTURE THEREOF**

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

The invention is directed to an optically pumped surface-emitting semiconductor laser device having at least one radiation-generating quantum well structure and at least one pump radiation source for optically pumping the quantum well structure, whereby the pump radiation source comprises an edge-emitting semiconductor structure.

Description of the Related Art

A semiconductor laser device of the species initially described is disclosed by US 5,991,318. An optically pumped vertical resonator semiconductor laser having a monolithic surface-emitting semiconductor layer structure is disclosed therein. Given this known device, the optical pump radiation, whose wavelength is shorter than that of the generated laser emission, is supplied by an edge-emitting semiconductor laser diode. The edge-emitting semiconductor laser diode is externally arranged such that the pump radiation is beamed obliquely in from the front into the intensification region of the surface-emitting semiconductor layer structure.

A particular problem given this known device is comprise therein that the pump laser must be exactly positioned relative to the surface-emitting semiconductor layer structure and, additionally, requires an optical means for beam focusing in

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order to image the pump radiation exactly into the desired region of the surface-emitting semiconductor layer structure. These measures involve considerable technological outlay.

In addition to the losses at the optics, moreover, coupling losses also occur that reduce the overall efficiency of the system.

Another problem is comprised therein that only a few quantum wells can be excited by pump radiation due to the pumping from the front.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The object of the present invention is comprised in making available a semiconductor laser device of the species initially cited with simplified adjustment of the pump source and surface-emitting layer structure and with high output power. Further, a technically simple method for manufacturing such a device is recited.

According to the invention, the radiation-generating quantum well structure and the edge-emitting semiconductor structure are epitaxially grown on a common substrate given an optically pumped surface-emitting semiconductor laser device of the species initially cited. The layer thicknesses of the individual semiconductor layers can be very exactly set in the epitaxy, so that a high positioning precision of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure relative to the radiation-generating quantum well structure is advantageously achieved.

With the inventive device, further, a uniform optical pumping of the quantum well structure can be achieved for high output powers in the fundamental mode.

In an advantageous embodiment, the surface-emitting quantum well structure and the pump radiation source are arranged side-by-side on the substrate such that

a radiation-emitting region of the pump radiation source and the quantum well structure lie at the same height above the substrate. What is thereby achieved is that pump radiation is laterally coupled into the quantum well structure during operation of the semiconductor laser device. This means that the beam axis of the pump radiation proceeds essentially parallel to the substrate surface and, thus, essentially vertically relative to the beam axis of the laser beam generated by the surface-emitting semiconductor laser device.

Given such a device, the quantum well structure is "pumped" transparently at first from the lateral surfaces during operation until, finally, the entire lateral cross-sectional area thereof is laser active. Due to the lateral optical pumping, moreover, a uniform filling of the quantum wells with charge carriers is achieved.

Preferably, the quantum well structure is surrounded by the edge-emitting semiconductor structure. At least one gain-guided radiation-emitting active region that serves as a pump radiation source is formed therein on the basis of at least one current injection path on the surface of the semiconductor laser structure. Alternatively, at least one index-guided radiation-emitting active region of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure serves as the pump radiation source. This is defined, for example, with at least one current injection path on the surface of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure in combination with, for example, etched trenches in the semiconductor structure fashioned along the current injection path.

Preferably, the ends of the current injection path facing toward the radiation-generating quantum well structure have a spacing of $10\text{ }\mu\text{m}$ through $50\text{ }\mu\text{m}$, especially preferred approximately $30\text{ }\mu\text{m}$. As a result thereof, disturbing leakage currents and other disturbing influences at the boundary surfaces between the edge-emitting

semiconductor structure and the surface-emitting layer sequence, i.e. the input surfaces for the pump radiation, are reduced.

The aforementioned embodiments can be advantageously fabricated overall with traditional semiconductor process technology.

When, during operation of the device, an adequately high current flows through the injection paths into the active layer of the pump radiation source, an intensified spontaneous emission (super-radiation) is formed, this being guided into the surface-emitting laser region and being absorbed thereat. The electron-hole pairs generated as a result thereof are collected in the quantum well and lead to the inversion in the intensification region of the surface-emitting laser structure.

The excitation of the surface-emitting laser structure can ensue by pumping the quantum well structure or confinement layers adjacent thereto. When pumping the confinement layers, the pump efficiency is preferably enhanced in that the band gap thereof decreases toward the quantum well structure. This, for example, can be achieved by modifying the material composition. As a result thereof, internally electrical fields are generated in the confinement layers that drive the optically generated charge carriers into the active quantum well region.

In an especially preferred embodiment, a plurality of pump radiation sources are arranged star-like around the quantum well structure, so that the quantum well structure is transparently "pumped" and laser-active over its entire lateral cross-section in a short time and very uniformly.

The boundary surface between edge-emitting semiconductor structure and quantum well structure is preferably at least partially reflective. What is thereby achieved is that a back-reflection into the edge-emitting semiconductor structure

derives at the edge to the surface-emitting laser region, this leading to the formation of laser radiation in the pump source and, thus, to enhanced pump efficiency.

Generating laser radiation as pump radiation and, thus, enhanced pump efficiency is alternatively achieved in that respectively two pump radiation sources arranged at opposite sides of the quantum well structure together form a laser structure. The end faces of the edge-emitting radiation sources lying parallel to one another and facing away from the quantum well structure are fashioned as mirror surfaces for this purpose and serve as a resonator mirror. These, for example, can be generated by cleaving and/or etching (for example, dry etching) and can be provided with a passivation layer and/or can be highly reflectively mirrored.

The opposite pump radiation sources are coupled during operation via the transparently pumped quantum well structure to form a single, coherently resonating laser. Given optimum end mirroring, the entire optical power stored in the pump laser is then available as pump power except for the losses at the boundary surfaces between the pump laser and surface-emitting laser.

Preferably, the edge-emitting semiconductor structure comprises a large optical cavity (LOC) structure. Given this, an active layer is embedded between a first and a second waveguide layer that are in turn embedded between a first and a second cladding layer.

In an advantageous development of the invention, it is provided that the edge-emitting semiconductor structure be fashioned as a ring laser. Here, a ring laser is a laser structure wherein ring modes can form during operation. The design of the appertaining laser resonator in ring form is thereby advantageous, as to be explained below, but not compulsory.

The resonator of such a ring laser can be formed with totally reflective boundary surfaces, so that no highly reflective mirrors are required. The risk of a lower radiation yield due to damage at the mirrors is thus also reduced. Further, a ring laser is distinguished by an advantageously large mode volume and by a high mode stability.

Preferably, the quantum well structure to be pumped is arranged within the ring resonator, so that the entire resonator-internal radiation field is available for pumping the quantum well structure. It is thereby especially advantageous to arrange the active layer of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure and the quantum well structure at the same height above the substrate, so that a large overlap derives between the volume of the quantum well structure to be pumped and the radiation field of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure and, thus, a high pump efficiency derives.

In an advantageous development of the invention, the resonator of the ring laser is formed by an annularly closed waveguide. The guidance of the pump radiation field therein ensues by total reflection at the limitations of the waveguide, so that highly reflective mirrors are also advantageously not required here. Further, the pump radiation field can be very well-adapted to the volume of the quantum well structure to be pumped as a result of the shaping of the annularly closed waveguide.

The edge-emitting semiconductor structure in a preferred development of the invention is surrounded by a medium whose refractive index is lower than the refractive index of the semiconductor structure. As a result thereof, a totally reflective surface that serves as a limitation of the laser resonator arises at the transition from the semiconductor into the optically thinner, surrounding medium. For

forming an annularly closed waveguide, a recess filled with the optically thinner medium can be arranged within the edge-emitting semiconductor structure.

Due to the low refractive index, air or some other gaseous medium is particularly suitable as the surrounding medium. Alternatively, the edge-emitting semiconductor structure can also be surrounded by some other materials such as, for example, a semiconductor material, a semiconductor oxide or a dielectric having a lower refractive index.

Preferably, the semiconductor structure is formed as a cylindrical stack of circular or annular semiconductor layers. The cylindrical semiconductor body shaped in this way simultaneously represents the ring laser resonator at whose cladding surfaces the radiant field is guided in totally reflecting fashion.

Alternatively, the semiconductor structure can also be formed prismatically as a stack of semiconductor layers in the form of polygons or polygonal rings. As a result of this shaping, a largely uniform beam distribution and, correspondingly, a largely homogeneous pump density can be achieved in the quantum well structure.

A stack of semiconductor layers of the described shape can be formed comparatively simply, for example by etching from a previously epitaxially produced semiconductor layer sequence. Advantageously, the laser resonator of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure is simultaneously also formed with the shaping of the semiconductor body without additional mirrorings being required.

In an especially preferred development of the semiconductor device, the quantum well structure has more than ten quantum wells. This high number of quantum wells is possible because all quantum wells are directly pumped as a result

of the lateral input of the pump radiation. As a result thereof, a high gain in the surface-emitting quantum well structure is advantageously achieved.

The edge-emitting semiconductor structure is preferably fashioned such that it generates a pump wave whose maximum lies at the height of the quantum wells above the substrate, especially preferably at the level of the center of the quantum well structure.

In order to obtain especially high output powers, the edge-emitting semiconductor structure in an advantageous development is fashioned as what is referred to as a multiple stack or micro-stacked laser having a plurality of laser-active layer sequences (for example, double heterostructures) that are connected in series via tunnel transitions. The quantum well structure then advantageously comprises a plurality of quantum well groups that respectively lie at the height of a laser-active layer sequence of the pump source.

In a preferred method for manufacturing an optically pumped, surface-emitting semiconductor laser device according to the aforementioned embodiments, a first semiconductor layer sequence suitable for a surface-emitting semiconductor laser and having at least one quantum well structure is initially applied onto a substrate. Subsequently, the first semiconductor layer sequence is removed outside the intended laser region. An edge-emitting, second semiconductor layer sequence is deposited subsequently on the region over the substrate that was uncovered after the removal of the first semiconductor layer sequence, the second semiconductor layer sequence being suitable for generating pump radiation and transmitting it into the quantum well structure. Subsequently, at least one current injection path is fashioned in the edge-emitting semiconductor layer sequence.

Preferably, a buffer layer is first applied onto the substrate. A first confinement layer is deposited thereon. A quantum well structure suitable for a surface-emitting semiconductor laser is subsequently applied onto the first confinement layer and this quantum well structure is followed by a second confinement layer. After the removal of the confinement layers and of the quantum well structure and, partially, of the buffer layer outside the intended surface-emitting laser region, a first cladding layer, a first waveguide layer, an active layer, a second waveguide layer and a second cladding layer are successively applied onto the region of the buffer layer that is then uncovered. The respective layer thicknesses are designed such that the pump radiation generated in the active layer proceeds into the quantum well structure.

In another embodiment of the semiconductor laser device according to the invention, the radiation-emitting quantum well structure and the pump radiation source are arranged above one another on the substrate. The quantum well structure is thereby optically coupled to the edge-emitting semiconductor structure, so that pump radiation from the pump radiation source is guided into the quantum well structure during operation of the semiconductor laser device.

The edge-emitting semiconductor structure preferably comprises a first waveguide layer and - as viewed from the substrate - a second waveguide layer following thereupon between which an active layer is arranged. The quantum well structure is epitaxially grown on the second waveguide layer, covers only a sub-region of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure and is optically coupled thereto.

For improving the infeed of the pump radiation into the quantum well structure, the boundary surface between second waveguide layer and adjacent cladding layer

is bent or buckled toward the quantum well structure in the proximity of the surface-emitting laser region.

In order to improve the infeed of the pump radiation into the surface-emitting semiconductor structure, the refractive index of the second waveguide layer is advantageously higher than the refractive index of the first waveguide layer and/or the active layer is placed symmetrical in the waveguide fashioned by the two waveguide layers.

Analogous to the above-described, first embodiment, one or more gain-guided and/or index-guide, radiation-emitting active regions are fashioned as pump radiation sources in the edge-emitting semiconductor structure.

In a preferred method for manufacturing an optically pumped, surface-emitting semiconductor laser device according to the aforementioned, second basic embodiment and the developments thereof, an edge-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence is first applied onto a substrate. A surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence having at least one quantum well structure is then applied thereon. Subsequently, the surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence is removed outside the intended laser region before at least one current injection path is fashioned in the edge-emitting semiconductor layer sequence.

To this end, a buffer layer is preferably first applied onto the substrate. Subsequently, a first waveguide layer, an active layer and a second waveguide layer are deposited successively thereon. A first confinement layer, a surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence having a quantum well structure and a second confinement layer are applied onto the edge-emitting layer sequence produced in this way. The confinement layers, the surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer

sequence and, in part, the second waveguide layer are then removed outside the intended surface-emitting laser region.

In an inventive method for manufacturing an optically pumped, surface-emitting semiconductor laser device having a ring laser as a pump radiation source, a surface-emitting semiconductor layer sequence having at least one quantum well structure - as already set forth is initially applied on a substrate, the layer sequence is removed outside the planned laser region, and the edge-emitting semiconductor structure of the pump radiation source is applied onto the region uncovered as a result thereof.

Subsequently, the outside region of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure is removed for shaping the laser resonator. A central sub-region in the inside of the semiconductor structure is thereby also preferably eroded for forming a ring resonator. The removal of the sub-regions can, for example, ensue with a dry etching process. Advantageously, a complicated post-processing of the etched surfaces is not required.

Alternatively, the method steps can also be applied in a different sequence. For example, an edge-emitting semiconductor structure can be applied first on the substrate, this then being eroded in the planned laser region of the quantum well structure (which is yet to be formed). In the next step, the surface-emitting semiconductor layer sequence having at least one quantum well structure is applied on the uncovered region. Subsequently, the outside region of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure is again removed for shaping the laser resonator. In a modification of the method, the shaping of the laser resonator can also occur before the application of the surface-emitting semiconductor layer sequence.

In a preferred development of the two above-recited embodiments, a highly reflective Bragg reflector layer sequence is fashioned at one side of the quantum well structure, this representing a resonator mirror of the surface-emitting laser structure. A further Bragg reflector layer sequence or an external mirror is arranged at the opposite side of the quantum well structure as second, partially transmissive resonator mirror.

Preferably, the substrate is composed of a material that is transmissive for the laser beam generated in the semiconductor laser device, and the highly reflective Bragg reflector is arranged at that side of the quantum well structure facing away from the substrate. This enables a short connection between the semiconductor structures and a heat sink and, thus, a good heat elimination from the semiconductor structures.

In order to prevent disturbing transverse modes (modes parallel to the substrate - whispering modes), absorber layers are arranged in the edge region and/or in etching structures of the surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence.

The inventive semiconductor laser device is particularly suitable for employment in an external resonator wherein a frequency-selected element and/or a frequency doubler is located.

Advantageously, the inventive semiconductor laser device - via modulation of the pump laser - can be modulated by modulation of the pump current or via a short-circuit connection of the surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence.

Further advantageous developments and improvements of the device and of the method of the invention derive from the exemplary embodiments described below in conjunction with Figures 1 through 14.

DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 shows a schematic illustration of a section through a first exemplary embodiment.

Figures 2a through 2e show a schematic illustration of a method sequence for manufacturing the exemplary embodiment according to Figure 1.

Figure 3a shows a schematic illustration of a section through a second exemplary embodiment.

Figure 3b shows a schematic illustration of an advantageous development of the waveguide of the exemplary embodiment according to Figure 3a.

Figures 4a through 4c show a schematic illustration of a method sequence for manufacturing the exemplary embodiment according to Figure 3.

Figure 5 shows a schematic illustration of a plan view onto a first arrangement of current injection paths on an edge-emitting semiconductor structure.

Figure 6 shows a schematic illustration of a plan view onto a second arrangement of current injection paths on an edge-emitting semiconductor structure.

Figure 7 shows a schematic illustration of a plan view onto a third arrangement of current injection paths on an edge-emitting semiconductor structure.

Figures 8a and 8b show a schematic illustrations of semiconductor laser devices with absorber layer.

Figures 9a and 9b show a schematic illustration of a section and of a plan view of a first exemplary embodiment having a ring laser as pump radiation source.

Figure 10 shows a schematic illustration of a plan view of a second exemplary embodiment having a ring laser as pump radiation source.

Figures 11a and 11b show a schematic illustration of a plan view of a third and fourth exemplary embodiment having respectively two ring lasers as pump radiation sources.

Figures 12 and 12b show a schematic illustration of a method sequence for manufacturing the exemplary embodiment according to Figure 9.

Figure 13 shows a schematic illustration of an inventive semiconductor laser device having an external resonator.

Figure 14 shows a schematic illustration of a modulatable semiconductor laser device of the invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Identical elements or elements having the same effect are provided with the same reference characters in the Figures.

The exemplary embodiment of Figure 1 is, for example, an optically pumped surface-emitting semiconductor laser chip having a laser emission at 1030 nm. Therein, a buffer layer 6 is applied on a substrate 1. The substrate 1 is composed, for example, of GaAs and the buffer layer 6 is composed of undoped GaAs.

A surface-emitting semiconductor laser structure 10 having a quantum well structure 11 is applied on the buffer layer 6 centrally over the substrate, this representing the surface-emitting laser region 15. The semiconductor laser structure

10 is composed of a first confinement layer 12 located directly on the buffer layer 6, of a quantum well structure 11 arranged on the confinement layer 12 and of a second confinement layer 13 applied on the quantum well structure 11.

The confinement layers 12 and 13 are composed, for example, of undoped GaAs, and the quantum well structure 11 comprises, for example, a plurality (≥ 3) of quantum wells that are composed of undoped InGaAs whose thickness is set to the emission at 1030 nm and between which barrier layers of GaAs are located.

A Bragg mirror 3 having, for example, 28 through 30 periods GaAlAs (10%Al) / GaAlAs (90%Al) that represents a highly reflective resonator mirror is deposited over the surface-emitting semiconductor laser structure.

An edge-emitting semiconductor laser structure 21, for example a large optical cavity (LOC) single quantum well (SQW) laser structure for an emission at approximately $1\mu\text{m}$, is deposited in the environment of the laser region 15 on the buffer layer 6. This structure 21 is composed, for example, of a first cladding layer 28 (for example, n-GaAl_{0.65}As), of a first waveguide layer 23 (for example, n-GaAl_{0.1}As), of an active layer 25 (for example, an undoped InGaAs-SQW), of a second waveguide layer 24 (for example, p-GaAl_{0.1}As) and of a second cladding layer 29 (for example, p-GaAl_{0.65}As).

For example, a p⁺-doped GaAs layer can be applied on the second cladding layer 29 as a cover layer 30.

The LOC region 22 is arranged at the same height as the quantum well region of the surface-emitting laser structure 10; preferably, the active layer 25 is located at the same height above the substrate 1 as the quantum well structure 11.

In a particular embodiment of the exemplary embodiment, the edge-emitting semiconductor structure 21 comprises a plurality of active layers 25 that are connected in series via tunnel transitions. Analogous thereto, the quantum well structure 11 comprises a plurality of quantum well groups that respectively lie at the height of an active layer 25 of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure 21.

All semiconductor layers are, for example, produced with metallorganic vapor phase epitaxy (MOVPE).

In the mirrors 31 proceeding perpendicular to the layers of the edge-emitting semiconductor laser structure 21 are located in the proximity of the outer edge of the edge-emitting semiconductor laser structure 21, these end mirrors 31 extending at least into the first cladding layer 28, here up to the buffer layer 6, proceeding from the cover layer 30. For example, these are produced after the growth of the edge-emitting semiconductor laser structure 21 by etching (for example, reactive ion etching) of corresponding trenches and the subsequent filling thereof with highly reflective material. Respectively two mirrors 31 parallel to one another are arranged at opposite sides of the quantum well structure 11 (see Figures 5 and 6).

Alternatively, the end mirrors can be manufactured in a known way by cleaving along crystal planes. As shown in Figure 1, these are then not necessarily arranged in the chip but are formed by the cleaved chip lateral surfaces (see Figure 7).

In electrically insulating mask layer 7, for example a silicon nitride, an aluminum oxide or a silicon oxide layer, with which current injection paths 26 of the edge-emitting semiconductor laser structure 21 are defined are located on the free surface of the cover layer 30 and of the Bragg mirror 3 (see Figures 5 and 6. A p-

contact layer 32, for example a known contact metallization, is applied on the mask layer 7 and - in the recesses thereof for the current injection paths 26 - on the cover layer 30.

For example, six stripe arrays each having 15 stripes ($4\mu\text{m}$ stripe, 10μ pitch) with approximately $150\mu\text{m}$ active width that are arranged symmetrically star-shaped around the surface-emitting laser region 15 are selected for the pump source.

Preferably, the ends of the current injection paths 26 facing toward the radiation-generating quantum well structure 11 have a spacing of $10\mu\text{m}$ through $50\mu\text{m}$, particularly preferably of approximately $30\mu\text{m}$, therefrom. As a result thereof, disturbing leakage currents and other disturbing influences at the boundary surfaces between the edge-emitting semiconductor structure 21 and the surface-emitting layer sequence 10 are reduced, i.e. at the infeed surfaces for the pump radiation 2.

All current injection paths 26 can be provided with a common p-contact layer 32, as a result whereof the radiation-emitting regions of the edge-emitting structure are connected parallel to one another in operation. Given an intended, separate drive of these individual radiation-emitting regions, a correspondingly structured p-conductive, first contact layer 32 is applied. As a result thereof, an optimized pump light distribution (for example, similar to a Gauss profile) can be produced over the lateral cross-section of the surface-emitting structure.

For generating index-guided pump regions in the edge-emitting structure 21, trenches manufactured, for example, by etching can be formed therein along the current injection paths 26 (the trenches being shown in the Figures 5 and 6), these extending, for example, up to $0.5\mu\text{m}$ into the second waveguide layer 24. As a

result thereof, an improved wave guidance is achieved at the edges of the pump regions.

The principal surface 16 of the substrate 1 facing away from the semiconductor structure is provided with an n-conductive, second contact layer 9, for example likewise a known contact metallization, except for an exit window 8 for the laser beam (indicated with the arrow 5).

The principal surface 16 of the substrate is preferably anti-bloomed in the region of the exit window 8 in order to reduce back-reflections into the chip.

A laser resonator of the surface-emitting laser structure 10 can be fashioned as a Bragg mirror 3 and an external, further mirror (not shown in Figure 1) arranged at the opposite side of the substrate 1 or can be formed of a further Bragg mirror arranged between the substrate 1 and the quantum well structure 11.

During operation of the semiconductor chip, pump radiation (indicated by the arrows 2) is generated in a region of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure 21 that represents the pump radiation source 20 and that are defined by the current injection paths 26, and this pump radiation is coupled into the quantum well structure 11 of the surface-emitting laser structure 10.

Given adequate back-reflection at the boundary surface between the edge-emitting structure 21 and the surface-emitting structure 10 and a suitable position of the end mirrors 31, laser radiation that leads to an enhanced pump efficiency is generated in the edge-emitting structure 21.

Preferably, the end mirrors 31 are arranged such relative to one another that these form a laser resonator for two radiation-emitting regions of the edge-emitting structure 21 that lie opposite one another. The two radiation-emitting regions lying

opposite one another are then coupled to form a single coherently resonating laser after the transparent pumping of the surface-emitting laser structure 10. Given optimum mirroring of the end mirrors 31, the entire optical power generated by the pump laser is available as pump power except for losses at the boundary surface between the edge-emitting structure 21 and the surface-emitting structure 10.

Given the method schematically shown in Figures 2a through 2e for manufacturing the exemplary embodiment according to Figure 1, the buffer layer 6, the first confinement layer 12, the quantum well structure 11, the second confinement layer 13 and the Bragg mirror layers 3 are initially successively applied onto the substrate 1, for example by MOVPE (Figure 2a).

Subsequently, an etching mask 17 (for example, a Si-nitride mask), is applied onto the region of this layer sequence provided as a surface-emitting laser region 15.

Subsequently, the Bragg mirror layers 3, the confinement layers 12 and 13, the quantum well structure 11 and, in part, the buffer layer 6 are removed, for example by etching, for example dry-etching with Cl chemistry, outside the intended surface-emitting laser region 15 (Figure 2b). The first cladding layer 28, the first waveguide layer 23, the active layer 25, the second waveguide layer 24, the second cladding layer 29 and the cover layer 30 are successively applied then on the uncovered region of the buffer layer 6, for example again with MOVPE (Figure 2c).

With, for example, reactive ion etching and suitably known mask technology, trenches for the end mirrors 31 are then etched (see Figure 2d) in the most recently applied edge-emitting structure 21, these trenches being subsequently coated or filled with reflection-enhancing material. The etching mask 17 is also removed.

Subsequently, the electrically insulating mask layer 7 is applied onto the cover layer 30 and onto the Bragg mirror 3 before the p-contact layer 32 and the n-contact layer 9 are finally produced (Figure 2e).

Before the application of the insulating mask layer 7, the trenches described above in conjunction with Figure 1 are optionally produced for generating index-guided pump lasers, being produced by etching.

In order to reduce radiation losses, the substrate 1 is preferably thinned to less than 100 μ m or completely removed after the MOVPE.

In the exemplary embodiment according to Figure 3, a buffer layer 6 is initially situated surface-wide on the substrate 1 and an edge-emitting semiconductor laser structure 21 is arranged thereon surface-wide wherein an active layer 25 is arranged between a first waveguide layer 23 and a second waveguide layer 24.

In a planned laser region 15 over the middle of the substrate 1, a surface-emitting quantum well structure 11 is grown on the second waveguide layer 24 followed by a confinement layer 13 and a Bragg mirror layer sequence 3.

An electrically insulating mask layer 7 that comprises recesses for current injection paths 26 of the edge-emitting structure 21 (see Figure 7) is applied in the region around the laser region 15 onto the second waveguide layer 24 or, potentially, onto a highly doped cover layer applied thereon. A first contact layer 32 is located on the electrically insulating mask layer 7 and in the recesses thereof on the second semiconductor layer or, on the cover layer and a second contact layer 9 having an exit window for the laser beam (indicated with the arrow 5) is arranged at that side of the substrate 1 lying there opposite.

For producing index-guided pump regions in the edge-emitting structure 21, trenches manufactured, for example, by etching can be fashioned (shown in the Figures 5 and 6) in the second waveguide layer 24 along the current injection paths 26. An improved waveguidance at the edges of the pump regions is achieved as a result thereof.

Cleaved sidewalls of the chip, for example, are provided here as end mirrors 31 of the edge-emitting structure 21.

During operation, pump laser radiation is generated in the edge-emitting laser structure, a part thereof being coupled into the quantum well structure 11 lying thereabove.

In order to promote the infeed, the active layer 25 is asymmetrically located in the waveguide formed by the two waveguide layers 23 and 24. Alternatively or additionally, the refractive index of the second waveguide layer 24 can be higher than that of the first waveguide layer 23 and/or the second waveguide layer can be pulled up toward the laser region 15 in the direction of the quantum well structure 11 for the same purpose (See Figure 3b).

The materials recited for the corresponding layers of the exemplary embodiment according to Fig. 1 can be used by way of example here as materials for the various layers.

A laser resonator of the surface-emitting laser structure 10 can also be formed in this exemplary embodiment from the Bragg mirror 3 and from an external, further mirror (not shown in Figure 3a) arranged at the opposite side of the substrate 1 or a further Bragg mirror arranged between the substrate 1 and the quantum well structure 11.

Given the method for manufacturing a device according to the exemplary embodiment of Figure 3a that is schematically shown in Figures 4a through 4c, a buffer layer 6 is first applied onto the substrate 1. The first waveguide layer 23, the active layer 25 and the second waveguide layer 24 are subsequently successively grown thereon. Subsequently, the quantum well structure 11 is grown onto the second waveguide layer 24, followed by the confinement layer 13 and the Bragg mirror layer 3 (Figure 4a). These layers are produced, for example, with MOVPE.

Subsequently, an etching mask 17 is applied onto the sub-region of the layer sequence that has been grown and that is provided as laser region 15, and the Bragg mirror layer 3, the confinement layer 13, the quantum well structure 11 and, in part, the second waveguide layer 24 are removed outside the laser region 15 with etching (Figure 4b).

Subsequently and for definition of the current injection paths 26, the electrically insulating mask layer 7 is applied onto the second waveguide layer 24 before the contact layer 32 is then deposited.

Subsequently, the second contact layer 9 having an exit window 8 is applied onto the principal surface of the substrate 1 lying opposite the semiconductor layer sequence (Figure 4c).

In order to reduce radiation losses, the substrate 1 here is also preferably thinned too, for example, less than 100 μ m or is completely removed following the MOVPE.

The inventive, so-called wafer lasers are preferably soldered with the Bragg mirror down onto a heat sink. One electrode is located on the heat sink and the second is generated by bonding on the wafer laser surface.

In order to prevent disturbing transverse modes (modes parallel to the substrate - whispering modes), absorber layers 18 (see Figures 8a and 8b) are arranged in the edge region and/or in etched structures of the surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence 15. Suitable absorber materials for such applications are known and are therefore not explained in greater detail here.

Figure 9a shows a section through an exemplary embodiment of an optically pumped, surface-emitting semiconductor device having a ring laser as the pump radiation source. The sequence of the individual semiconductor layers essentially corresponds to the exemplary embodiment shown in Figure 1.

Differing from the semiconductor device shown in Figure 1, the edge-emitting semiconductor structure 21, comprising the first cladding layer 28 (for example, n-GaAl_{0.65}As), the first waveguide layer 23 (for example, n-GaAl_{0.1}As), the active layer 25 (for example, InGaAs-SQW), the second waveguide layer 24 (for example, p-GaAl_{0.1}As) and the second cladding layer 29 (for example, p-GaAl_{0.65}As), as a ring laser.

The plan view onto the semiconductor body shown in Figure 9b illustrates this. The sectional view according to Figure 9a corresponds to a vertical section along line A-A.

In the plan view, the edge-emitting semiconductor structure 21 comprises an octagonal shape having four full rotational symmetry as well as a quadratic, central recess 38. The quantum well structure to be pumped and which is circular in the plan view is completely arranged within the octagonal ring formed in this way. This octagonal ring forms a ring resonator in the form of a totally reflective, closed waveguide.

During operation, cyclically circulating ring modes resonate in this waveguide, illustrated, for example, with reference to the modes 37a, b and c, these optically pumping the quantum well structure 11. As a result of the total reflection at the outside surfaces, the output losses in this exemplary embodiment are extremely low, so that the entire resonator-internal radiation field is advantageously available for pumping the quantum well structure 11.

As a result of the illustrated shaping of the octagonal ring, the ring modes 37a, 37b and 37c are essentially of the same priority and propagate uniformly. A largely uniform radiation field thus derives in the radial direction (along the line B-B) and, correspondingly, a largely uniform pump density derives in the quantum well structure 11 to be pumped.

The second mirror required for a laser mode of the surface-emitting semiconductor laser structure 10 is not integrated in the semiconductor body in the illustrated exemplary embodiment but is provided as an external mirror (also see Figure 13). Alternatively, this second mirror can also be fashioned in the semiconductor body in a way (not shown) similar to the mirror 3. In this case, the second mirror would have to be arranged, for example, within the provided laser region 15 between the buffer layer 6 and the quantum well structure 11.

Figure 10 shows another exemplary embodiment of an inventive semiconductor laser device in plan view. Differing from the exemplary embodiment described above, the totally reflective waveguide is fashioned as a circular ring here. The quantum well structure 11 to be pumped is completely arranged within the ring region.

A plurality of ring modes can resonate within the annular resonator. The illustrated mode 39 merely indicates one possible example. The quantum well structure 11, additionally, is pumped by a plurality of further modes with high efficiency.

As derives from Figure 10, the central recess 38 can also be foregone for simplification, so that the resonator comprises a solid circular area in cross-section. As a result thereof, the manufacturing outlay is advantageously reduced. However, modes that proceed through the resonator center can then resonate up to a certain extent. These modes are not totally reflected at the resonator limitation and therefore have comparatively high output losses that ultimately reduce the pump efficiency.

Figure 11a shows a further exemplary embodiment of the invention wherein the quantum well structure 11 is pumped by two ring lasers that are independent of one another. These are fundamentally constructed like the ring laser of the first exemplary embodiment.

The appertaining waveguides 44 and 45 cross in two regions 46a and b, whereby the quantum well structure 11 to be pumped is arranged in the region 46a. The pump density in the quantum well structure 11 is enhanced further with this arrangement having two ring lasers. The essential pump modes are again shown by way of example with reference to the modes 37a, b, c, d, e and f. Advantageously, a largely uniform pump density again derives here as in the case of the first exemplary embodiment.

Figure 11b shows an advantageous version of the arrangement shown in Figure 3a that is particularly distinguished in that the shaping of the crossing, annular

waveguides 44 and 45 is simplified. To that end, the cross-sections of the central recesses 40 and 41 are reduced to triangles. The lateral recesses 43 shown in Figure 11a and the central recess 42 are foregone. The manufacturing outlay is advantageously reduced as a result of this simplification without significantly deteriorating the laser function.

As indicated in Figure 11b, a second quantum well structure 47 could, further, also be fashioned in the second crossing region 46b of the two ring lasers.

Figure 12 schematically shows two method steps for manufacturing an inventive semiconductor laser device.

As already described and shown in Figures 2a, 2b and 2c, the method begins with the application of the buffer layer 6, of the first confinement layer 12, of the quantum well structure 11, of the second confinement layer 13 and of the Bragg mirror layers 3 on a substrate 1, for example with MOVPE. Subsequently, an etching mask 7 is applied onto the region of this layer sequence provided as the surface-emitting laser region 15, and the stack of Bragg mirror layers 3, confinement layers 12 and 13, quantum well structure 11 and parts of the buffer layer 6 outside the intended surface-laser region 15 are removed. The first cladding layer 28, the first waveguide layer 23, the active layer 25, the second waveguide layer 24, the second cladding layer 29 and the cover layer 30 are successively applied onto the uncovered region of the buffer layer 6, for example again with MOVPE (not shown, see Figures 2a, b, c).

According to Figure 12a, subsequently, the outside regions and the central region of the semiconductor structure are eroded for forming the totally reflective,

closed waveguide. This, for example, can ensue with reactive ion etching upon employment of a suitable, known mask technique.

The lateral surfaces of the edge-emitting semiconductor structure manufactured in this way require no optical coating and forming a nearly loss-free ring laser resonator.

Finally, the etching mask 17 is removed, the electrically insulating mask layer 7 is applied onto the Bragg mirror 11 and the surface is covered with a p-contact layer 32. The substrate is provided with n-contact surfaces 9 (Figure 12b).

The inventive semiconductor laser devices particularly suited for employment in an external resonator with an external mirror 33 and a partially transmissive concave reflection mirror 34 in which a frequency-selected element 35 and/or a frequency doubler 36 is located (see Figure 13).

Advantageously, the inventive semiconductor laser device can then be modulated via modulation of the pump source (by modulating the pump current) or via a short-circuit connection of the surface-emitting semiconductor laser layer sequence (Figure 14).

The above-described structures can be employed not only in the InGaAlAs employed by way of example but, for example, can also be employed in the InGaN, InGaAsP or in the InGaAlP system.

Given a wafer laser in the InGaN system for an emission at 470 nm, the quantum wells are composed, for example InGaN for 450 nm emission, the confinement layers are composed of InGaN with a reduced refractive index, and the Bragg mirrors are composed of an InGaAlN system. The pump laser structure comprises an active region with quantum wells of InGaN for emission at approximately 400 nm as well as waveguide layers and cladding layers of GaAlN, wherein the desired refractive indices are set by variation of the Al content.

Although other modifications and changes may be suggested by those skilled in the art, it is the intention of the inventors to embody within the patent warranted hereon all changes and modifications as reasonably and properly come within the scope of their contribution to the art.

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